

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentle lady from the Virgin Islands for the opportunity to speak. And today I rise in opposition to an unfortunate trend that seems to be creeping up all over the country, laws that add unnecessary complications to the process of voter registration and the process of voting.

Now, some of these initiatives include photo ID laws, reduction in time to vote or to register to vote, laws complicating the rules for running voter registration drives.

Now, none of these little schemes prevent individuals from voting, but the unnecessary complications guarantee that many will not get their paperwork in on time and, as a consequence, many will not be able to vote. In some States, those few votes can make the difference in a presidential election.

Now, we need to protect the right to vote, not add unnecessary complications that will result in fewer people voting. But we see all over the country efforts to reduce the Election Day registration. In those States that have allowed it for decades, those who could have registered on Election Day will find that they cannot vote.

In States that allow early voting, we're seeing efforts to reduce the number of days of early voting, meaning that some people may not be able to get their votes in as they could have with the longer period.

In some States the rules for voter registration drives are becoming more onerous, so much so that groups that have traditionally conducted voter registration drives, such as the League of Women Voters, are having second thoughts about conducting those drives under the new rules, and that will mean fewer people will be registered to vote.

And many States are imposing for the first time a requirement that voters display a specific voter ID. This scheme that is so slanted that, as has been previously stated, some government-issued IDs are acceptable and some are not. Texas proposed to accept the concealed weapons permit as acceptable government-issued ID, but not student IDs from a State college.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these voter ID requirements are a solution in search of a problem. There is no credible evidence that in-person voter fraud, which is the only kind of fraud that the photo ID would prevent, is any problem around the country. In fact, multiple studies have found that virtually no cases of in-person voter fraud can be found.

And the requirement of voter ID in subjecting people to that time and expense will guarantee that many will not get their paperwork in on time. There are complications that can occur when you're trying to get that paperwork done. Some of the elderly have never gotten a photo ID and wouldn't know where to start. Many who are adopted may not know where to find a birth

certificate. Many counties--for the elderly people, some counties have lost their records and the records aren't available.

And it produces bizarre results, such as the nuns who were prohibited from voting because they didn't have photo ID, even though the election officials knew them personally.

In Virginia, we have an exception to the photo ID. You have to present a photo ID, but if you don't have one, you can sign an affidavit under pains of a felony and go ahead and vote right now. But unfortunately, even in Virginia they're trying to eliminate that exception and require people to go through the time and expense of getting photo ID if they don't have one.

Now, if we're going to look for problems in the voting process maybe we ought to look at Iowa that just certified, had announced that one person had won the Republican Caucuses one day and a couple of days later certified results that another one had won. And there are public reports that suggest that really nobody knows who won. I mean, if you want to look for some voter irregularities, maybe we ought to look at that.

Or maybe we ought to look at the candidate who tried to become a candidate on the Virginia Republican Presidential Primary this year. He has publicly stated that petition signatures submitted on behalf of his

campaign, of those signatures, hundreds were, in fact, bogus. And if they had not been caught, he would have qualified for the ballot. But fortunately, it has been ascertained that so many were bogus signatures that he, in fact, did not qualify for the Virginia ballot.

But as we see all over the country, efforts to reduce Election Day registration and other forms of ease in voting are making it possible for many people to lose those rights. While the situations like Iowa and in Virginia, where it's clear that those situations need scrutiny, there is no evidence that in-person voter fraud is a problem anywhere in the United States.

Voting is not an arbitrary, inconsequential act. The cumulative effect of individuals voting elects our government officials who directly create our laws and policies. It is important that we ensure that every eligible voter is given the opportunity to vote, free from unnecessary barriers and schemes. Those schemes that erect barriers to the right to vote are unfair in our democracy.

And I thank the gentle lady from the Virgin Islands for giving us the opportunity to make these statements.